

## Petition Program non Audio-Described Video Transcript

Our environment is where we live, work, and play. Sometimes, substances get into the water, soil, or air in our environment — and that can lead to health concerns.

For example, if harmful substances get into your private well water supply, your tap water may not be safe to drink.

Or imagine there's an industrial facility in your city that releases dangerous substances into the air. Breathing in those substances could lead to health problems for people in your community.

If you're concerned about an environmental issue in your community, you can ask a government agency called the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, or ATSDR, to look into the issue.

ATSDR is a federal public health agency that works to protect communities from environmental health hazards — like substances in the environment that may be harmful to our health.

ATSDR responds to environmental health emergencies, works with state, local, and territorial public health agencies, and investigates environmental issues to learn how they may affect people's health.

Through ATSDR's Petition Program, any person or community organization can ask ATSDR to investigate an environmental health concern in their community by submitting a petition.

A petition is a written request explaining the issue you're concerned about. You don't need to ask anyone to sign your petition, and you can send it directly to ATSDR.

To submit a petition, visit <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/petition-process.html> or send an email to [ATSDRPetitions@cdc.gov](mailto:ATSDRPetitions@cdc.gov).

When you submit a petition, ATSDR will carefully review your request and decide on next steps.

As part of this process, ATSDR will review existing data, or information that other public health or environmental agencies have already collected, about your concern. ATSDR will also determine if the agency has previously conducted work at the site and check to see if people have made complaints to other environmental and public health agencies.

The petition evaluation process usually takes about 6 to 12 months. At the end of the process, ATSDR will let you know if your petition is accepted or denied.

If ATSDR accepts your petition, that means ATSDR will start public health assessment activities to learn more about the issue.

If ATSDR denies your petition, that means ATSDR will not be doing public health assessment activities on the issue — but they may be able to help your community in other ways, depending on the situation.

If your petition is denied, ATSDR will tell you why. For example, a petition may be denied if ATSDR has already addressed the issue, ATSDR does not have enough information to address the issue, or ATSDR determines that community members are unlikely to come into contact with harmful substances at levels of concern.

If your petition is accepted, ATSDR scientists will study the environmental health issue that you described in your petition. More specifically, scientists will work to find out if there are harmful substances in the water, soil, or air, if those substances could get into your body, and if they affect your health.

ATSDR may work with your state and local health departments, territorial and tribal health departments, and community organizations to address concerns.

Keep in mind ATSDR is not a regulatory agency. That means ATSDR can't clean up harmful substances or direct facilities to change how they operate.

It's also important to understand that ATSDR can't diagnose health conditions or tell you why people in your community have health issues.

What ATSDR can do is recommend steps that community members, organizations, and agencies can take to address possible health risks and protect the health of everyone in your community.

To learn more about ATSDR's Petition Program and how to submit a petition, visit <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/petition-process.html>.

If you have any questions, you can call ATSDR toll-free at 1-800-232-4636 or TTY: 888-232-6348. Ask to be connected to your ATSDR regional office.

By submitting a petition, you can speak up for the health of your community.